DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 366 923 CS 011 602

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TITLE Whole Language and Basal Readers.
PUB DATE Apr 94
NOTE 41p.; M.A. Thesis, Kean College. Poor reproducibility due to broken print.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Basal Reading; Comparative Analysis; Elementary Education; *Instructional Effectiveness; Reading Research; *Whole Language Approach
IDENTIFIERS California Test of Basic Skills; East Brunswick School District NJ

ABSTRACT

A study explored the nature of whole language as compared to the basal program for the years 1990-1991 and 1991-1992. The samples of pupils involved were from the eight elementary schools, housing grades kindergarten through grade five, in East Brunswick, New Jersey. The students have been instructed for many years in the basal approach. Since September, 1992, both the basal approach and the whole language approach have been used. The California Test of Basic Skills was administered in the spring of 1991 and 1992. The children follow a formal language arts curriculum to prepare for the test, covering specific objectives and skills. Results indicated no significant differences in the mean scores between basal and whole language samples. Findings suggest that, even though educators differ in their opinions of the two approaches, a combination of the two approaches may be the best way to meet the needs of all students. (Two tables of data are included; 33 references are attached.) (Author/RS)

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ED 366 923

WHOLE LANGUAGE AND BASAL READERS

Robin Bastolla

Accepted
4/6/94

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Arts Degree in Education
Kean College of New Jersey
April 1994

CS011602

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the nature of Whole Language as compared to the basal program for the years 1990 - 1991 and 1991 - 1992. The samples of pupils involved were from the eight elementary schools, housing grades kindergarten through grade five, in East Brunswick, New Jersey. They have been instructed for many years in the basal approach. Since September 1992 both the basal approach and the Whole Language approach have been used.

The CTBS/4 was administered in the spring of 1991 and 1992. The children follow a formal language arts curriculum to prepare for this test. There are specific objectives and skills that are covered.

It was hypothesized that no mean differences in achievement between the two equivalent samples of pupils existed when taught by either the basal or basal cum Whole Language approach.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Several people were helpful to me during the course of this study and I would like to express my appreciation to them at this time.

Dr. Albert J. Mazurkewicz was instrumental in providing guidance during this research project. Dr. Joan Kastner was and still is an inspiration to me. Thank you for making your classes educational as well as fun.

Judy Goldberg was an asset to me throughout this program particularly when we were studying for the Comprehensive Exam. I would like to thank my friends and the staff at Warnsdorfer School, East Brunswick , New Jersey for being so supportive and patient throughout this program. Arthur Weissman introduced me to a book that inspired me to continue my education as well as being a computer wiz when mine failed.

My parents, Marilyn and Ben Lass, who always have been so supportive and knew the right thing to say at all times. Thank you for being who you are! My brother and sister-in-law Barry and Judy Lass were always there with an encouraging word and a supportive ear.

My daughters, Lauren and Lisa, thank you for pitching in and doing additional chores like laundering, cooking, chaffering, etc. Your encouragement and patience will always be remembered.

My husband, Frank, was understanding, supportive, patient, a tremendous help and an editor as well. Thank you, Frank, I will always remember the gourmet meals that I came home to from graduate school.

I could not have done this without all of your support.

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Today's teachers are faced with a dilemma: how do children best learn to read? Whole Language has become the buzz word for the 1980s and 1990s. The basal reader is no longer considered the only solutions to how children learn to read.

Most school districts are gradually, and some not so gradually, moving in the direction of Whole Language. They are integrating the language arts into the reading curriculum. Whole Language stresses being flexible and taking the interests of the children into account to make reading a natural process while basal readers provide children with an emphasis on the skills needed to read.

It remains difficult for teachers and administrators to decide which ways to educate our students to be the best readers that they can be in order to become lifetime readers and critical thinkers.

Research evidence on the effectiveness of Whole Language versus a basal approach is meager and inconclusive at best. Research on a basal approach versus a basal plus Whole Language approach is nonexistent.

According to Regie Routman (1991), basals need to be examined more closely and educators need to apply pressure to have publishers make better basals. Special attention must be given to the enrichment section. Enrichment activities, in particular, were likely to be overlooked because they were found at the end of the given story.

Patrick Shannon (1982) believes that there is a lack of communication between teachers and administrators. This resulted in the teachers using commercially prepared materials because the teachers felt the administrators required them to do so. There are educators who believe that commercial materials are the key to teaching children how to read and this has been substantiated by scientific research. Patrick Shannon (1989) also believes that when using the basal, the sequencing of skills is very important for the children to learn to read. He is comfortable with requiring teachers to follow a set plan developed by curriculum developers outside of the classroom and school context.

John B. Thomas (1991), feels phonics teaches children the relationship between letters and sounds. It teaches children how to decode words by teaching them that sound represent letters and how to blend those sounds. For some children this blending process is natural and decoding is easy. Other children, however, have difficulty understanding the sound/symbol relationship of phonics.

Whole Language should also be compared to a Progressive Movement of the early twentieth century. Carole Edelsky, Bess Altwerger, and Barbara Flores (1991), looked at the Language Experience Approach. This latest approach was the beginning of the loosening into Whole Language.

According to Carol Edelsky, Bess Altwerger, and Barbara Flores from the late 1800's to the early 1930's the Progressive Education goal was to help develop the whole child - mind, body, and ideals. Progressive Education was experimental - the students could try out ideas and learn from the results and teachers approached teaching in the same manner. The curriculum was driven by the children's own experiences and development. The feeling was that textbooks and teachers input were limiting and therefore an inferior process of learning. During this time of Progressive Education, the children were permitted to pursue their own questions and study what they were really interested in. At this time, the educators were also interested in integrating the curriculum. The belief was that in order to prepare the children for life in a democracy they needed to give the children a democratic experience.

Jeanne Chall, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is of the belief that Whole Language is already declining. She feels that some schools are disenchanted and have found that children are not reading well. According to Chall research has established that reading is primarily a phonemic activity. It is essential for children to develop the relationship between sounds and letters. She believes that Whole Language is hurting children by not providing systematic teaching of phonics.

Jerome Harste, a professor of language education at Indiana University-Bloomington, believes that Whole Language treats the phonemic system as a system to gain meaning, while the basal approach teaches reading through primarily the semantic system. Yet, he points out, Whole Language teachers do teach more phonics because of invented spelling. This calls upon students to apply phonics knowledge.

It would appear, that proponents of the Whole Language approach operate on faith, belief, or a child-centered philosophy, and its approach has its emotional appeal. The basal, used for over one hundred years, obviously has been used to teach millions to read and should not be discarded. It seems to follow then that the philosophy of the Whole Language approach should be incorporated into the basal. This combined approach might have additional benefits than either alone and may add something to a typical basal approach.

HYPOTHESIS

An attempt to explore the nature of adding Whole Language philosophy to the basal program when compared to the basal approach alone was the focus of this study. It was hypothesized that no mean differences in achievement between two equivalent samples of pupils

would exist when taught by either the basal or basal cum Whole Language approach.

PROCEDURES

The elementary schools in East Brunswick, New Jersey were selected to participate in this research. Eight elementary schools, housing grades kindergarten through grade five, have been instructed in the basal approach for many years and, since September 1992 both the basal approach and the Whole Language approach conjunction have been used.

Over thirty five hundred (3035) kindergarten through grade 5 students attended the eight elementary schools as of September 30, 1992 to June 30, 1993. This was an increase of thirty six children over the 1991 - 1992 year.

The children in grades kindergarten through grade 5 were given the CTBS 4 in the spring of each year. To prepare for this test the children follow a formal language arts curriculum. There are specific objectives and skills to be covered.

The CTBS 4 was adopted in 1990 - 1991 and has replaced the CTBS. As a result of these changes the data prior to 1990 - 1991 could not be evaluated. A comparison of the mean test results of the CTBS 4 for

the 1991 - 1992 year using the basal only was made to the mean test results of the 1992 - 1993 year when basal and Whole Language were integrated.

RESULTS

The comparison of study skills and spelling reported in Table I

TABLE 1

Mean Percentile Scores of Basal Versus Whole Language Samples 1991- 1992 Versus 1992 - 1993 Cohorts

Grades	Study Skills		Spelling	
	Basal	Whole Language Basal	Basal	Whole Language Basal
Kindergarten	*	*	*	*
1	*	*	*	*
2	*	*	64	65
3	*	*	64	63
4	72	71	64	63
5	72	69	67	64

*CTBS 4 does not test these areas at these grade levels.

show little mean differences in grades kindergarten through grade five. Study skills and spelling tests were not administered to grades kindergarten and grade one since the CTBS 4 does not test these areas in these grades. Grade two did not take study skills but did take the spelling portion. Examining the data in Table 1 it is apparent that there is no substantial difference in grades two through four. Grade five results shows that basal results compared to Whole Language and Basal

resulted in a 3 percentile point gain in Study Skills. It also showed that in fifth grade there was a 3 points gain in Spelling in the Mean Percentile Scores of Basal over Whole Language. Neither of these findings were significant.

As can be seen in Table 2, once again there is no significant

TABLE II

Mean Percentile Scores of Basal Versus Whole Language Samples 1991 -1992 Verses 1992 Cohorts

Grades	Total Reading		Total Language	
	Basal	Whole Language Basal	Basal	Whole Language Basal
Kindergarten	61	64	*	*
1	66	65	72	70
2	64	66	73	71
3	66	67	71	73
4	66	65	74	73
5	66	66	76	74

*CTBS 4 does not test these areas at this grade level

difference in the mean scores between Basal and Whole Language and Basal samples. However, in kindergarten the results showed that Whole Language and Basal scored slightly above Basal alone. The results of grades one through five showed insignificant advantages between Basal and Whole Language and Basal. It should be noted, however, that for grade five, in regard to Total Language the Basal sample scored 3 percentile points higher over Whole Language and Basal.

CONCLUSIONS

The hypothesis that there would be no significant means differences between the samples as is the result of differentiating instruction is supported by the findings and the hypothesis was accepted.

While this is so it should be noted that the Whole Language approach to teaching reading focuses on meaning rather than the subskills of language while the Basal approach teaches a variety of skills both, of course, are concerned with reading. According to P. David Pearson, Dean of the College of Education at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, most teachers strike a compromise between traditional Basal practice and the Whole Language approach.

Jeanne Chall, professor emerita of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, believes that the Whole Language movement is declining. She believes that for a child learning to read, reading is primarily a phonemic activity, the relationship between sounds and letters is the basic knowledge to be acquired. She feels if children haven't mastered phonics they can not learn to read. Finally it is her contention that Whole Language is hurting children by not providing the teaching of phonics, as is done in the Basal.

The lack of phonics in Whole Language is a major point of contention. Critics of Whole Language ignore letter-sound relationships.

Advocators of Whole Language say this approach does teach phonics., but in the context of whole texts, and this thereby allows students to focus on meaning.

As previously stated, Jerome Harste, a professor of language education at Indiana University - Bloomington, feels the traditional approach of Basals, teaches reading through phonics and a Whole Language approach teaches reading through meaning. Yet, he asserts that Whole Language teachers do teach phonics, because invented spelling requires students to apply phonics knowledge. According to him then, Whole Language actually does utilize the principle of phonics instruction.

Textbooks have changed radically in response to the Whole Language movement. Children now get "untouched literature", meaning that the controlled vocabulary and limited story characters have disappeared. Most teachers' guides incorporate using language experience ideas for furthering reading through literature. The basal reader, now, is no longer designed to function as a self - contained unit, but rather as a structured way to guide teachers in the various appproaches to teach reading.

The Basal has changed to meet the new demands of educators. However, the consensus among many educators shows a need for further expansion of the Basal, namely, a combination of Basal and Whole Language.

It is therefore concluded that educators, although differing in their opinions on these two approaches of teaching reading, agree that, there may very well be a need for a combination of approaches and that both approaches should be utilized in order to best meet the needs of all students. The ultimate result being, students that become lifelong readers and critical thinkers.

Whole Language amd Basal Readers: Related Literature

The Whole Language philosophy started because educators thought they needed a change from the basal readers. They were disappointed with the basal. Evidence exists both in support of and against basals.

It needs to be remembered that the basal tradition has been in use for more than one hundred years. Basal reading programs have had enormous influences on how reading is taught and on the kind of materials students read. Whole Language has, in comparison, been in existence for only a short time.

In the colonial period, the most widely used hornbook was a thin strip of wood usually four to five inches long and a few inches wide. Affixed to this was a single sheet of paper containing the alphabet, simple syllables and the Lord's prayer. In the beginning of the eighteenth century the New England Primerintroduced reading, using the alphabet. From the Primer, colonial students graduated to the Psalter or directly to the Bible. After the middle of the eighteenth century most reading instruction was in a spelling book until almost the middle of the nineteenth century when both reading and spelling were taught. McGuffy's taught from the part to whole (letter to syllable to word), from predictable to less easily predicted, from simple to complex. McGuffy's Eclectic Readers offered an instructive contrast. This was the most popular readers ever published in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, poetry usually accounted for thirty percent of the total content. Today it is less than three percent of the

available pages. Most poems in the readers have less than one dozen lines.

By 1880, textbooks were developed for other subjects. In the 1920s, standardized testing was introduced. The emphasis shifted from oral reading to silent reading, from teaching appreciation of literature to instructing children to achieve speed and efficiency.

Illiteracy in America: Extent, Causes, and Suggested Solutions (1986) discusses the history of reading. It states that, until 1836, American teachers taught beginning readers using phonics. Over the next hundred years the "look-say" basal method was developed. By 1930, the Dick and Jane "look-say" basal reading series was born. Very soon after that, all publishing houses were producing such readers. Phonics was out and "look-say" had become common.

Whole Language should be compared to a Progressive Movement of the early twentieth century. Carole Edelsky, Bess Altwerger, and Barbara Flores (1991), also looked at the language experience approach. This latest approach was the beginning of the loosening into Whole Language.

Whole Language is, in part, a direct descendant of Progressive Education. There certainly is emphasis on children's purpose, experimenting, giving children choices, language being learned through use and not through lessons - just like Whole Language. However, Whole Language is more than just the above. It is also using predictable language.

When Progressive Education wrote about language being learned through use and not through lessons, and language acquisition being a model of education, they meant something different than what education means now. By language being learned through use and not through lessons, Dewey was referring to social values and social class.

According to Carole Edelsky, Bess Altwerger, and Barbara Flores (1991), from the late 1800s to the early 1930s the Progressive Education goal was to help develop the whole child - mind, body, and ideals. Progressive Education was experimental- the students could try out ideas and learn from the results, and teachers approached teaching in the same manner. The curriculum was driven by the children's own experiences. The feeling was that textbooks and teachers' input were limiting and therefore an inferior process of learning. During this time of Progressive Education, the children were permitted to pursue their own questions and study what they were really interested in. At this time, they were also interested in integrating the curriculum. The belief was that in order to prepare the children for life in a democracy they needed to give the children a democratic experience.

In 1965, Dr. Louise Gurren, of New York University, and Ann Hughes, Research Director for the Reading Reform Foundation, reviewed thirty-six studies and found that teaching all main sound-symbol relationships, both vowel and consonant, from the start of formal reading instruction, benefits comprehension as well as vocabulary and spelling. This research shows a bend back to phonics and support of the basal.

John B. Thomas (1991), feels phonics teaches children the relationship between letters and sounds. It teaches children how to decode words by teaching them that sounds represent letters and how to blend those sounds. For some children this blending process is natural and decoding is easy. Other children, however, have difficulty understanding the sound/symbol relationship of phonics.

Basal reading textbooks have been a part of elementary schools for a long time and for the most part, their contribution has been positive. They help teachers organize a complex and difficult curriculum while also supplying text for students to read according to Gerald G. Duffy, Laura Roehler, and Joyce Putnam (1981), all supporters of the basal.

According to Regie Routman (1991), basals need to be examined more closely and educators need to apply pressure to have publishers make better basals. Special attention must be given to the enrichment section. Enrichment activities, in particular, were likely to be overlooked because they were found at the end of the given story.

Helene B. Slaughter (1988) believes both direct and indirect instruction occurs in Whole Language classrooms. It was thought a contrast between formal teaching (a term sometimes used for direct teaching) and indirect teaching occurs only in conventional classrooms. Successful Whole Language settings found some formal or direct teaching activities. Whole Language teachers tolerate a wider range of individual differences and are more willing to acknowledge the child's point of view than direct teachers, who were using the basals or skills based approach

Carol J. Fuhler (1990), a whole language advocator, feels that revised textbook series reflect an effort to include recognized children's authors, a variety of literary genre, excerpts, and complete stories from award winning books to get children to read. Depending on the publisher, there may be an increased emphasis on the writing process, thought provoking questions and techniques to teach effective reading strategies. Every series still has workbooks, texts, and reinforcement dittos. Her premise is that it is better for a child to learn to read within the context of a real book, rather than through a short story or an excerpt from the real thing.

Patrick Shannon (1989) believes that when using the basal the sequencing of skills is very important for children learning to be literate. He agrees that teachers should be required to follow a set plan developed by curriculum developers outside of the classroom and school context.

Francis P. Hodge (1989) is the owner of the Hodge Podge Books in Albany, New York. The New York State Reading Association, in 1988, presented him with the Friend of Reading Award. He believes that the dissatisfaction with the basal reading program came from students and teachers. A literature-oriented teacher did not require monotonous materials provided by the basal series. This teacher was able to extract similar learning from good pieces of literature. The teacher could present vocabulary lessons, spelling words, and creative writing assignments based on literature. This was done according to the needs, interests, and intelligence of the particular group being taught.

Francis B. Hodge (1989) also advocates that Whole Language classroom instruction should be learner-based. Children begin with their prior knowledge of a topic. Students then read from a variety of sources to expand their knowledge. This kind of reading can lead students in many directions and it allows them a large number of literary works. Students are encouraged to accept, modify, or reject as they read. This is directed by the teacher to the important curricular concepts. Reading, writing, and listening skills are all utilized to help students to think critically.

The Center for the Study of Reading (1982) found the basal approach somewhat insufficient. They found that teachers followed very closely the instruction in the teacher's manuals, frequently teaching with the manuals in front of them. An examination of these manuals found them inadequate. They provided poor instruction for teaching complex skills. Some directions were poorly organized and did not provide adequate instruction for teaching the required skills of decoding, vocabulary, or comprehension. Some instruction suggested reteaching a skill that had not been taught before.

Dr. Richard Venezky (1987) of the University of Delaware analyzed four basal reading programs most commonly used in the late 1970s and confirmed the Center for the Study of Reading's findings. He addressed the Reading Reform Foundation Conference in 1981. Approximately eighty to ninety percent of the children in the United States at that time were taught with programs that were not instructional programs for reading. If the basals are analyzed closely, one would find

that never once in the decoding program do they ever get to the point of applying decoding, never once is the child even encouraged to sound out a word. Guessing from context still remains the basis of what is called phonics in the basal programs of America.

Robert L. Hillerich (1990) believes Whole Language is a viewpoint or a philosophy which includes oral language. This helps children realize that print represents the language that they have been speaking and hearing for years. He feels children need to take risks in reading and must learn to monitor themselves. He also believes the reading of whole texts versus excerpts is important in Whole Language, so each child will want to read and reread the material.

Hillerich says that in Whole Language the teaching of skills is necessary to put these skills to use through meaningful lessons. Finally, Hillerich states that Whole Language emphasizes incidental development of skills as opposed to direct instruction. Many Whole Language advocates claim that reading can be taught to children in school using big books and predictable books, reading aloud to children and encouraging them to chime in when they can.

Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) believe that basal reading programs have dominated the classroom for decades. Ninety-five to ninety-nine percent of American teachers relied on the basal in 1958. As of 1980, eighty to ninety percent still did rely on the basal. They found that during the average day, only seven minutes is spent on reading from books while seventy percent of a typical period of reading instruction is filling in worksheets. Whole Language advocates believe that children should be

spending their time reading and not completing in worksheets. In 1988, ninety-eight percent of the teachers in the United States used the basal series. On the other hand, basal advocates feel basal provides management system for reading instruction, scope and sequence of skills, evaluation and diagnosis.

In another study, Dr. Richard Anderson (1982), Director of the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois found that approximately ninety-six percent of classroom teachers in grades one through eight use commercial basal reading programs. Three percent use instructional materials developed by government projects mainly to teach low-achieving or disadvantaged children. Only about one percent use materials they have developed or library books.

In 1967, Dr. Chall concluded there was a need for a correction in beginning reading instruction methods. Most school children in the United States were taught to read by a meaning-emphasis method. This is analytic phonics which is associated with a more natural language development. Yet research from 1912-1965 indicated that a code-emphasis method produced better results, at least until the point where sufficient evidence seemed to no longer be available: the end of third grade. An example of the code-emphasis method is one that views beginning reading as essentially different from mature reading and emphasizes learning of printed code for spoken language.

Marilyn R. Brinkley in Becoming a Nation of Readers: Implications for Teachers (1986) found that in most classrooms, workbooks and skill sheets play a large part of reading instruction. In fact,

students may spend up to seventy percent of the time allocated for reading instruction in seatwork. However, analyses of workbook activities reveal that many require only a perfunctory level of reading. Children rarely need to draw conclusions or reason on a high level. Almost none require any extended writing. Many workbook exercises drill students on skills that have little value in learning to read. Classroom research suggests that the amount of time devoted to worksheets is unrelated to year-to-year gains in reading proficiency. Teachers have typically used workbooks and skill sheets as ways to manage their classroom reading instruction. As teachers worked with one group, the other children worked on workbook assignments. If, as recommended, teachers decrease their use of worksheet activities they need to look for alternative activities which meet the following criteria:

a. students can engage in the activity either independently or with the help of another student

b. reading activities use meaningful texts. Reading stories, for example, is more meaningful than reading isolated sentences

c. the writing activities should require children to communicate a complete message. Having children write letters that are actually mailed is more useful than having them fill in blanks on worksheets.

Chall (1987) believes that research does not support claims that skills and knowledge develop naturally just from reading. Some children may learn how letters relate to the sounds of language by themselves, but the research of the past seventy years states that direct instruction is needed and contributes to better development of decoding, word

recognition, and comprehension, and provides a better transition to the later reading stages.

Pressley, another proponent of the basal, concluded that children do not discover on their own summarizing, question generalizations, imaging, and so on. Accordingly teaching should be explicit, intensive, and extensive.

Stahl and Miller (1989) found Whole Language stressed children's oral language as a bridge to print, avoided preconceived skill sequences, used literature instead of basals, and emphasized meaningful use of language versus isolated parts. These researchers found that there was no significant difference in the effectiveness between basals and Whole Language. However, when broken down by levels, they found a slight advantage for Whole Language at the readiness level and a slight advantage for basals beyond that. The less structured approach is appropriate in acquainting children with the purpose for print. More structure is helpful if they are to learn the skills of independent readers.

It should be noted, however, that the research of Stahl and Miller is already outdated because of the type of basal they compared with Whole Language. The impact of the current trend has affected basals which are now incorporating many of the positive elements of Whole Language.

According to Diane Ravitch (1987) modern textbooks are written to satisfy complex formulas of readability and vocabulary control specified by city and state education agencies. This formula requires writers and editors to restrict the length of words and sentences and the number of

new or uncommon words in a story. Such rules make it difficult to use classic literature.

Dr. David P. Yarington notes in The Great American Reading Machine that education professors often wrote the readers they used to train their teachers. Those teachers, in turn, served on textbook selection committees to purchase textbooks written by professors. This aided in keeping the basal approach the primary approach to reading.

Diane Ravitch (1987) is of the belief that despite their critics, reading textbooks have become a fixture in American schools. They offer school districts a package of colorful posters, workbooks, and teacher's guides as well as endorsements from reading experts. The intellectual level of the teachers' guides are even lower than that of the children's textbooks.

According to Diane Ravitch (1987) few textbooks such as Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich provide supplementary literary anthologies for schools. The only series that provides a balance of classic and contemporary writing is the Open Court.

Dolores Durkin (1984) found most teachers assigned all the practice workbook and copymasters available. They often did not teach the material because the students had done so much of it, but they still choose to assign it. None of the teachers told the children why they were doing any of the work or helped to make connections for the students. The problem may not be the materials but the application of them.

Richard D. McCallum (1988) recommends not to "throw the basal out with the bath water." There are practices or materials which have

shown to produce good results. Basals do have limitations, but these stem from our changing understanding of the reading process and the application of that understanding. He feels that the basal series plays a critical role in reading instruction. Basals have changed and have put the result of research into practice. Basals have provided on the job training for reading teachers. The content of the basal has continued to change during the twentieth century. Content changes have continued with the inclusion of minorities, women, and the handicapped.

Educators have delved into what effect the basal manual had on teacher behavior in the classroom. In Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading (1985) the authors found there was a need to spend more time on comprehension instruction and less time to complete workbooks and skill sheets.

According to Deborah J. Evans (1990) basal advocates are afraid of leaving something out. Teachers feel that as long as they are responsible for their student's test scores they are reluctant to change. Some teachers feel that if they do everything in their basal manuals their children will be more successful on the achievement tests.

Patrick Groff (1987) is aware of the need to change the reputation of the basal reader. Publishers have hired linguists to make sure that phonic errors do not end up in the teaching manuals. He is of the belief that some children learning how to read will find more phonic rules than will others because they are better able to make inferences about the correct pronunciations of phonemes after hearing their approximate pronunciations. There are children who can make these inferences.

However, there are children who struggle with such decision. To retain a rule in one's memory demands overlearning of this phonics generalization. However, this practice sometimes has diminished returns. Some children already know the phonics rules being taught. These children lose the opportunity to extend their abilities to apply phonics through extensive reading. Few pretests of children's knowledge are given before phonics instruction begins.

Dolores Durkin (1984) believes little or no time goes to new vocabulary, background information, or prereading questions. Considerable attention went to comprehension assessment questions and written practice. She found that thirty to sixty percent of the students' time was spent on some type of seatwork. When manual recommendations were not done, it was a result of a lack of time and importance. She advocates giving more time to new vocabulary, background information, prereading question, instruction on essential topics, fewer assignments and less time on oral reading and comprehension questions. She believes that this would result in better readers.

Diana Urpelding (1990) feels that basals are skill-centered programs that rely on workbooks and skill-drill seatwork. Whole Language advocates believe that these isolated skills are taught at the expense of understanding the whole picture. Whole Language advocates also feel basals lack content and context. They believe a good teacher will teach the appropriate skill at the moment a student needs it. This makes it more interesting and meaningful to the student.

She also states that basals use separate skill instructions. The advocates of Whole Language believe that in the basal there is a lack of freedom of choice and that if certain pages in the basal lessons and activities are skipped, the students will not learn the essential skills.

She also advocates the incorporation of basal readers into Whole Language. Basals include excellent stories written by the nation's best children's authors. These stories can be used as a springboard to other wonderful books. Most basal readers encourage teachers to choose from the stories and activities rather than use all of them.

Research involving Whole Language and the use of the basals are limited. One study involved a group of second graders in New York City (Cohen 1968). Both experimental and control groups had an identical basal reading program. The experimental group was read aloud to from fifty carefully selected trade picture books and was followed up with meaningful related activities. The experimental group showed significant increases over the control group in word knowledge, reading comprehension, and quality of vocabulary.

In another study in Kansas, first graders were immersed in print from the first day of school. A blending of Whole Language and the basal was used. Students were involved in motivational creative writing activities, reading predictable trade books, listening to exciting stories, learning to read and write from their own experiences, and learning or reviewing the alphabet letters and their sounds. Basal stories were viewed as only one type of experience within a theme. Students showed significant gains with the integrated approach.

In 1988, the California school system made the change to Whole Language. They purchase ten percent of the nation's books. The publishing companies, who also print the CAT, CTBS, et cetera, want this business and have begun to change the basal to make it literature-based. According to Susan Harmon (1992), "The publisher's control not just reading but the bulk of the elementary school curriculum. This conspiracy must be confronted."

Gerald Duffy feels teachers can be decision makers. In fact, they must be decision makers if reading instruction is to be truly effective. On the other hand, some teachers feel that basal authors know more about teaching reading than the teachers do. Nevertheless, the solution does not lie with abandoning basal textbooks. The problem is not the basal textbook per se. The problem is the belief that test makers, curriculum developers, and district administrators can make decisions about curriculum organization, instructional presentation, and evaluation. Classroom teachers and these developers must be collaborating professionals. Duffy feels that teachers must be encouraged to be in control of their instruction to make significant progress toward educational change in the elementary school instruction.

Julie Jensen and Nancy Roser believe basal readers alone can not offer a full range of opportunities for language use, help children think and communicate with clarity, create a love of language, promote discussions of importance to particular children, or encourage and respond to writing. They both feel that basal readers do not involve listening, speaking and writing.

According to John B. Thomas (1991) Whole Language is a philosophy not a teaching method. The philosophy is that children learn how to read and write the same way they learned to talk. The students in a Whole Language situation listen to their teacher read, read along with him/her or read alone. These children use the "whole word system" to discover the meaning of the words they encounter.

According to Nola Kortner Alex (1990), students who read nonbasal material have established an important connection: "what reading class is really all about is reading books." They have also been instructed in reading strategies that help in the content area topics.

Nola Kortner Alex (1990) found a teacher in a rural Appalachian school who supplements the basal reader with regional literature to teach reading to students. The students write their own regional stories. This is a highly motivating approach to stimulate language development in children.

Kenneth Goodman wrote What's Whole in Whole Language (1988). This includes a short synopsis of the Whole Language philosophy and Goodman's interpretation of how it can be implemented. Basal readers, sequenced skill programs, or the usual type of instructional materials are really not needed. In fact, he believes workbooks and duplicated skill exercises are inappropriate in Whole Language programs. It is his feeling that what is appropriate is anything the children need or want to read or write.

Patrick Shannon (1989) feels the Whole Language philosophy offers teachers and students more control over their lessons. The literary

lessons are discussed and negotiated between the students and the teachers. Whole Language advocates want students to use and develop their work on purposeful projects to better understand themselves. This requires the teachers to give the children the opportunity to be independent and to select the reading materials themselves.

Shannon also believes teachers do not lose control during Whole Language lessons. They share the responsibility. The teacher becomes more powerful to the children because they are willing to share authority and responsibilities. On the other hand, basal advocates believe lesson sequence is too important and that the learning experience may be missed.

Heidi Mills and Jean Anne Clyde edited Portraits of Whole Language Classrooms for Learning for All Ages (1990). They believe that the Whole Language curriculum should meet the needs and interests of all participants. Teachers and children should collaborate to support one another's growth. Like the teachers, children guide in the classroom and like the children, teachers are learners also. Working together, teachers and children can shape and reshape their learning environment. Success in the classroom is confidence in children, in their ability not only to make decisions about what to do in the classroom but also to learn from and to teach each other. They believe children can be responsible, independent learners if they are involved in a curriculum that supports making choices, setting goals, and being self motivated learners.

Judith M. Cochran (1989) believes that educators should give children the best of all worlds in reading instruction by stressing reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Literature-based reading instruction

exposes children to rich language and stories with emotion. She also believes that Whole Language stresses experiencing language as a totality and not a series of isolated skills. Using language is the best way to develop language. The basal has been successful in teaching basic skills, especially those that appear on standardized tests. Therefore, the way to give students comprehensive instruction is to select techniques from all approaches and combine them with good creative teaching practices.

Susan Ohanian (1991) believes that transformation from a skills based classroom to a literature-based one is difficult. Teachers must become familiar with a number of trade book titles available to them and learn to create strategies that integrate books with lesson plans.

Norma Collina and Carl Smith (1990) also believe it is important to locate the concepts you want to teach with the appropriate trade books. Here is the opportunity, not always available through the basal, to be certain that the reading material coincides with the skills.

Margaret Ann Richik and Linda Conviser Glick described a resource room program that uses the basal reading material with trade books and personal writing. This program enriched and complemented the children's classroom instruction and their overall literacy development.

Elfrieda H. Hiebert and Jacalyn Colt (1989) believe that when teachers focus only on independent reading of student-selected material, they fail to consider the guidance required by students. On the other hand, teacher-led instruction fails to develop independent reading strategies that produce lifelong readers. A total reading program should contain various

combinations of teacher and student interaction and selection of literature so that children can develop into thoughtful, proficient readers.

Peter B. Mosenthal (1989) believes the reading field is divided into two camps. The first camp is where children develop a common language, use standard spelling, grammar, handwriting, and punctuation. This assumes that students who perform well on standardized tests will be better citizens and workers. The second camp believes that the goal of education is to empower students to develop self-confidence, self-awareness, self-appreciation and selff-understanding. Researchers need to focus on a third approach that incorporates the best of both worlds whole minimizing their weaknesses.

If children are to be independent readers they need to learn some skills and they need to use these skills in real reading. Reading needs to be enjoyable and the practice of skills needs to be in library books. Both skill and interest are essential and skill without interest is futile but interest without skill is frustrating.

Roger Farr (1988) believes basals are a set of instructional materials that have been developed to exemplify an eclectic middle-of-the road philosophy. He believes that there are aspects of Whole Language that are incompatible with basal readers. For example, separate skills instruction of basal readers, resulting in workbook pages, ditto masters and mastery tests suggest erroneously that language development can be reduced to learning discreet skills. Another issue is the lack of freedom of choice in the basal. He also believes there are issues that coincide. Basals include stories written by the nation's best children's authors.

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These stories are used as introductions to a variety of excellent children's books. He states that most basal readers encourage teachers to choose from stories and activities and not use all of them. He ascertains that writing activities and a wide range of creative applications are now standard in most basals. Basal read authors and publishers are not out of step with Whole Language philosophy. He believes basal readers are constantly changing and they will continue to do so. The McGuffy reader of the 1800s are nothing like Dick and Jane readers of the 1930s which are different from today's basals. Robert Farr believes basals have to appeal to a wide audience of educators and students and therefore can not have one philosophy to the complete exclusion of others. At their best basals allow for teacher choice. They provide ample activities and materials so a teacher can use the material within their philosophy to guide instruction. He is of the belief that if basals did not exist, they would grow out of a need for classroom or group sets of stories for children to share.

Roger Farr is also of the belief that as teachers and administrators we need to work together so that instruction programs are understood as being more than a set of materials. Basals were designed to be not total programs, but useful tools for helping teachers carry out effective reading instruction. If we are to improve instruction, we must concentrate on what teachers do. It is teachers who must encourage, guide, and challenge students' ideas, and they must use a variety of materials so that students become active learners.

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